



## Young Adults in the Workplace: Organizational Wellness & Learning Systems Project

### YIW Overview:

The Young Adults in the Workplace (YIW) initiative is a multisite collaborative project with six multidisciplinary SAMHSA-funded grant teams implementing and evaluating workplace-based substance abuse prevention and early intervention programs for young workers. Young adults are at increased risk for developing chronic substance use-related problems, and few interventions are available for them, particularly in workplaces. The YIW program was designed to provide the nation's employers, unions, and organizations with empirical information about the efficacy of a diverse set of approaches to prevention and early intervention of substance abuse and comorbidity.

### Industry:

National restaurant chain

### Location:

Dallas/Fort Worth, Austin, and Houston, TX; Chicago, IL

### Demographics:

600 to 1,000 employees ages 16 to 30

### Program Description:

- OWLS adapted a Team Awareness program that incorporates focus group/advisory input with knowledge about emerging adulthood, aspects of personal and team resilience, job commitment, and restaurant culture.
- The program also emphasizes strong integration and alignment with restaurant operational goals and policies.
- Supervisors and employees receive training in peer referral skills, leadership, employee assistance program awareness, and in developing a culture of substance abuse prevention and health awareness in the workplace.
- The goals of the program are to reduce risks for substance abuse and enhance job commitment and positive retention among young workers.

### Early Findings:

- Understanding a specific worksite's culture is essential to the development of a recruiting and training strategy with top-down involvement ensuring motivated recruitment and participation.
- Adapting materials to a specific worksite ensures relevance and retention and bolsters involvement.
- Committed managerial participation is critical to success.
- "Awareness" training has a strong impact on the employees.



### Program Contact Information:

Joel Bennett, PhD • Organizational Wellness & Learning Systems • 4413 Overton Terrace Court  
• Fort Worth, TX 76109 • 817-921-4260 • owls@charter.net